

SHORT COMMUNICATION

***Stenanthera pungens* (Ericaceae: Epacridoideae: Styphelieae), a new combination, and a new genus for Western Australia**

Recently published research (Puente-Lelièvre *et al.* 2016) dealing with the molecular phylogeny of the tribe Styphelieae Bartl. has led to the reinstatement of *Stenanthera* R.Br., and the return to that genus of two widespread eastern Australian species, *S. pinifolia* R.Br. (the type species for *Stenanthera*) and *S. conostephioides* Sond. Cladistic analyses of DNA data produced a phylogenetic tree showing a well-supported sister relationship between these two species, together with *Astroloma* sp. Grass Patch (A.J.G. Wilson 110) (Western Australian Herbarium 1998–), and members of the Western Australian endemic *Conostephium* Benth. Since Bentham's (1868) treatment of Epacridaceae, *S. pinifolia* and *S. conostephioides* had been placed in *Astroloma* R.Br., although it has been recognised for many years (e.g. Quinn *et al.* 2003) that these two could not be regarded as conspecific with *Astroloma s. str.*

Because of the small sample size in *Conostephium* (only three of the eleven species were sampled for the recent study) there may still be some doubt about the adequacy of the molecular basis for the recognition of two genera in this part of the tree. The morphological grounds for the maintenance of two genera, however, are relatively strong (Table 1). If they were to be combined following future research then the older name, *Stenanthera* (Brown 1810), has priority over *Conostephium* (Bentham 1837).

In addition to the taxon currently known as *Astroloma* sp. Grass Patch, *Stenanthera* is also represented in Western Australia by the described species *Conostephium pungens* Keighery. Although the species was not included in the most recent molecular phylogeny (Puente-Lelièvre *et al.* 2016), the morphological attributes (refer Table 1) of *C. pungens* place it unequivocally in *Stenanthera*.

The purpose of this short communication is to formally transfer *C. pungens* to *Stenanthera*, and, in so doing, to add a new genus to the Western Australian flora.

Stenanthera pungens* (Keighery) Hislop, *comb. nov.

Conostephium pungens Keighery, *Nordic J. Bot.*: 22: 50–51 (2002). *Type*: east of Nyabing [precise locality withheld for conservation reasons], Western Australia, 4 May 1999, G.J. Keighery & N. Gibson 4967 (*holo*: PERTH 06823475; *iso*: CANB).

Distribution and habitat. Occurs on gypsum dunes in proximity to a salt lake in the west of the Mallee bioregion (Commonwealth of Australia 2016).

Conservation status. Department of Parks and Wildlife Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora: Priority Two (Jones 2015, as *Conostephium pungens*). This species is still known only from the type population. Although it was locally common there in the early 2000s (pers. observ.), any future expansion of a nearby gypsum mine could threaten its existence. The search for additional populations of *S. pungens* should be a high priority as it now seems increasingly likely that this is a rare species.

Table 1. A morphological comparison between *Stenanthera* and *Conostephium* (modified from Hislop 2013).

Stenanthera	Conostephium
<i>Corolla tube shape</i> : cylindrical or expanding towards the base of the lobes.	<i>Corolla tube shape</i> : tapering markedly towards the lobes.
<i>Corolla tube appendages</i> : hair tufts issuing from fleshy basal appendages in most species (absent in <i>S. pinifolia</i>).	<i>Corolla tube appendages</i> : appendages absent, hair tufts usually absent, but if present, issuing from unmodified tissue.
<i>Corolla lobes</i> : at least 4 mm long, external surface hairy in most species (hairy or papillate only towards the tips in <i>S. pinifolia</i>), internal surface clearly hairy, although unevenly so.	<i>Corolla lobes</i> : to 2.5 mm long, external surface glabrous, internal surface glabrous or sparsely and inconspicuously hairy.
<i>Internal corolla hair type</i> : ornamented.	<i>Internal corolla hair type</i> : smooth.
<i>Corolla colour</i> : uniformly red in most species, variable in <i>S. pinifolia</i> (tube various combinations of red, yellow and green, lobes green).	<i>Corolla colour</i> : tube pink or purple, lobes pink, white or yellow.
<i>Stamens</i> : anthers fully or partially exerted from corolla tube; filaments adnate to top of the tube.	<i>Stamens</i> : anthers included within corolla tube; filaments adnate to tube close to the middle or near the base.
<i>Distribution</i> : WA, NSW, SA, Tas., Vic.	<i>Distribution</i> : WA

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Michael Hislop

Western Australian Herbarium, Department of Parks and Wildlife,
Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre, Western Australia 6983